

such ability and integrity that, although a friend to John of Gaunt, he had obtained the confidence of the whole nation. He now did his duty by protesting against the lavish grants that the King was making to his courtiers. It was the old question, whether Crown land might be alienated, or whether it should be regarded as sacred to the public service. The young courtiers who surrounded Richard eagerly persuaded him that the Crown property was his property, that so it might the sooner become theirs. When the Chancellor expostulated, they induced the King to get rid of his best servant. Scrope's sudden dismissal, for such a reason as this, spread alarm and sorrow throughout the country.¹ Richard, at the age of sixteen, had himself overthrown the settlement of the kingdom made by Parliament, and had done so in order to plunge more freely into a policy of extravagant expenditure on his household.

The King took no part in the quarrel waged, in the following February, between Lords and Commons as to the destination and command of the crusade. Possibly this dispute alone prevented the two Houses from acting in concert to protest against the removal of Scrope. As it was, the Commons presented a petition praying the King that the principal officers of State should not in future be removed without due cause. So little heed did the King pay to this request, that on the very day on which Parliament was dissolved, he took the Great Seal from Bishop Braybrook, Scrope's successor, in order to give it to Michael de la Pole.² The new Chancellor was sufficiently experienced in public affairs to know that his position was perilous, that it was opposed to the spirit of constitutional government which had grown up during Richard's tutelage, and that he must be ready to encounter storms. At the next Parliament, in October 1383, he attempted to disarm criticism by an apology [or appearing in the office of Chancellor. He knew, he said, what he was unworthy, but the King had appointed him and he had no choice but to obey.³ Lords and Commons were on occasion acting in unison, but fortunately for Pole their

Wals. ii. 68-70; *Feed.*, iv. 150. - *Rot. Parl.*, Hi. 147 ;
Feed., iv. 162. » *Rot. Parl.* iii. 149.